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Report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-seventh session the report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on the work of the Institute during 2017 and 2018.

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Report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on the work of the Institute during 2017 and 2018

Summary

The present report covers the activities of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) during the biennium 2017–2018. It highlights the programmatic achievements of the Institute during that period and presents its institutional and financial situation.

Over more than five decades as the only United Nations institution devoted exclusively to social development research, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development has generated and convened innovative interdisciplinary knowledge and policy analysis on contemporary development challenges; contributed to evidence-based debate, policy and practice at the international, regional, national and local levels; and engaged with the international development community of policymakers, practitioners, researchers and activists. The Institute's status as an autonomous research body within the United Nations system enables it to shape debates and engage in policy dialogue, bringing diverse and often marginalized viewpoints to the table and contributing to the critical analysis and diversity in perspectives that are essential for advancement towards more equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

In the reporting period, UNRISD continued to carry out and to convene research under its three programme areas: social policy and development; gender and development; and the social dimensions of sustainable development. It pursued ongoing research projects and initiated work on the relationship between new technologies and human rights, inequality and climate justice. In those ways, the work of the Institute addressed system-wide development priorities related to poverty reduction, inequality, social protection, the empowerment of women and social drivers of sustainability.

The Institute's research contributed directly to the work of the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council on the above-mentioned themes. The Institute's research findings were also used by United Nations agencies, Member States (including during the high-level political forum on sustainable development), civil society and academia. Researchers regularly advised or provided briefings to those stakeholders, sharing knowledge on development issues, informing debates and framing policy alternatives.

During the reporting period, the Institute continued to innovate with respect to its communications and outreach activities and to strengthen institutional processes related to results-based management and impact.

Following the resolution of cash-flow challenges towards the end of 2016, the biennium 2017–2018 provided a period of relative stability, in which action was taken to strengthen the Institute with a view to being "fit for purpose". New partner agreements for unearmarked institutional funding allowed UNRISD to concentrate on implementing the agreed institutional strategy while extending research in new directions, and reforming key facets of the business model to underpin long-term institutional sustainability and lay the groundwork for future growth.

The Institute is funded entirely through voluntary contributions and depends on the support of Member States to ensure the fulfilment of its core mandate and functions to provide support to the United Nations system and to Member States. The Institute is grateful to its funding partners, in particular those providing unearmarked institutional support — Finland, Sweden and Switzerland — without which none of the Institute's activities could take place.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the activities of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) during the biennium 2017–2018. It is submitted to the Commission for Social Development in accordance with the terms set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/126 of 1 August 1963, in which it was stipulated that the Board of the Institute should, inter alia, submit regularly to the Commission a progress report on the work of the Institute.

2. The Institute was established in 1963 as an autonomous space within the United Nations system with the mandate to undertake policy-relevant research on the social dimensions of development. For over five decades, the Institute has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that social issues remain prominent within the development activities of the United Nations. UNRISD is the only institution in the United Nations system that is dedicated to research on social issues that are often neglected in development policy and practice.

3. The Institute uses its global convening power as a United Nations organization with a reputation for research excellence to leverage an international network of academics, policymakers and practitioners, thus bringing a diverse knowledge base and plurality of ideas to inform the work of the United Nations system on social issues.

4. The biennium was a period of relative stability, in which action was taken to strengthen the Institute to be "fit for purpose", following the resolution of cash-flow challenges towards the end of 2016. New multi-year partner agreements for unearmarked institutional funding allowed UNRISD to concentrate on implementing the agreed institutional strategy while extending research into new directions, and reforming key facets of the business model to underpin long-term institutional sustainability and lay the groundwork for future growth.

5. During the biennium, work was carried out under the Institute's strategic framework for 2016–2020, which links research, communications, policy engagement, results and impact. Annual work plans took into consideration priority concerns and themes of the United Nations system, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development.

6. Against the backdrop of institutional and financial consolidation undertaken in 2016, during the biennium UNRISD was able to deliver on its ambitious research agenda and engage on policy issues through a high number of publications and events. The Institute continued to position itself as a key player in the United Nations system and the global development community in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and as a knowledge hub and convening platform for critical debates on social development and international governance.

7. The Institute is funded entirely through voluntary contributions and its work is governed by an independent Board. These conditions provide it with the autonomy needed to produce high-quality independent research. The Institute depends on the financial support of Member States to ensure delivery on its core mandate and functions to provide support to the United Nations system and Member States.

II. Strategic framework

8. The biennium coincided with the second and third years of implementation of the Institute's strategic framework, *Transformations to Equity and Sustainability: UNRISD Strategy 2016–2020*.[1]

9. The strategy sets out the priorities and research themes of the Institute within an institutional framework that links research, communications, policy engagement, results and impact. It was developed through consultations with stakeholders of the Institute in the United Nations system, Member States, civil society and academia. It responds to contemporary development trends, policy concerns and scholarly debates, and aims to fill identified knowledge gaps, while anticipating social issues that are not yet part of mainstream discourse.

10. Under the strategy, the Institute is carrying out research that will help Governments and others to achieve their sustainable development objectives. An overarching goal of the Institute is to ensure that social development concerns and objectives remain prominent in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

11. Research is organized into three programme areas: (a) social policy and development; (b) gender and development; and (c) social dimensions of sustainable development. Each programme identifies key questions and topics for research that will contribute to addressing the contemporary challenges of inequality, conflict and unsustainable practices. In so doing, they aim to contribute evidence that supports efforts at the local, national, regional and global levels to make progress along sustainable and equitable development pathways.

12. Work within each programme is realized as a collaborative endeavour with the Institute's global networks of researchers, policymakers and civil society actors.

13. The strategy also includes information on research approaches, methods and data, and a results framework with objectives, activities and outputs. The budgetary and financial requirements for implementing the strategy are discussed.

14. Because the Institute must fully mobilize all the financial resources necessary to implement the strategy, it remains flexible and responsive to the changing context, emerging priorities and specific demands for research from United Nations entities, other research users and funding partners.

15. During the biennium, UNRISD developed nearly 30 project proposals. That allowed the Institute to make strong progress in the implementation of its institutional strategy, while also branching out into the following new research areas: elites and inequality, new technologies and human rights, climate justice, and sustainable development impact indicators.

III. Research agenda: transformation to equity and sustainability

16. The global commitments embodied in the 2030 Agenda contain ambitious promises of solidarity and transformation, combining a continued focus on the most disadvantaged people in low-income countries with the universal goals of greater social, ecological and economic equity and sustainability.

17. The 2030 Agenda resonates strongly with the Institute's mandate and institutional strategy. Three years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Institute's research and policy analysis have

[1] Available at www.unrisd.org/unrisd-strategy-2016-2020.

become critically important to ensuring that social equity, inclusion and justice remain central to the implementation of the Goals in terms of both policy and practice.

18. In carrying out its work programme, the Institute collaborated with its interdisciplinary research networks in the global South and North, engaging in two-way dialogue with partners to design, implement and deliver research projects, ensuring genuine co-production of knowledge and mutual learning.

A. Social policy and development

19. Social policy is and will be crucial in the process of implementing and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The social policy and development programme continues to combine work on new conceptual approaches, along with policy, institutional and political analyses at the national, regional and global levels.

20. The programme comprises projects of immediate relevance to the current policy context on the following themes: innovations in the field of social policy in low- and middle-income countries; the politics and the processes that shape domestic resource mobilization and fiscal space for fair and sustainable financing of social development; transformative change for children and the Sustainable Development Goals; the social, economic, ethical and policy dimensions of the financialization of commodity trading and its development impacts; new technologies and human rights; inequality, elites and social mobilization; and linking social protection and human rights.

1. Politics of domestic resource mobilization for social development

21. In a constrained fiscal environment, what are the possibilities for ensuring that revenues can be raised and allocated to social expenditures? That is a critical question in the context of discussions on financing for development and the 2030 Agenda. Through an integrated analysis of the economic, political, social and environmental dimensions of fiscal policies, the project "Politics of domestic resource mobilization for social development" focused on the political determinants of revenue performance and resource governance. UNRISD and country teams in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Nicaragua, Uganda and Zimbabwe carried out the project with funding from Sweden. Project research was conducted from 2012 to 2016, with the outputs being published during the biennium 2017–2018.

22. The project contributed evidence-based analysis to global debates with respect to bridging funding gaps in order to meet key global development targets and implement social programmes, strengthening national ownership and policy space, and enhancing the accountability of Governments to citizens. Key findings point to the political drivers of resource mobilization, as well as economic factors such as international commodity prices and access to foreign resources. In terms of policy implications, the project highlighted the need for transparent and inclusive tax bargains, a diversified and sustainable financing mix, an enabling macroeconomic environment and State capacity, global resource bargains that generate resources and regulations, and an international financial architecture that is coherent with the vision for sustainable development.

23. Relevant country case studies and thematic papers, videos and project briefs are available on the UNRISD website.[2] The research has been presented to country-level stakeholders and to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development to inform their work on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and sustainable finance for the Sustainable Development Goals.

[2] See www.unrisd.org/pdrm.

2. New directions in social policy: alternatives from and for the global South

24. The project "New directions in social policy: alternatives from and for the global South", carried out from 2014 to 2017 with funding from Sweden, examined the emergence, nature and effectiveness of recent innovations in social policy in the global South. The research and analysis stage of the project concluded during the biennium 2017–2018.

25. Country case studies were carried out by teams of local and international researchers in Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, South Africa and Tunisia. Thematic papers were prepared on institutional issues, informal employment, and transnational and global approaches to social policy. Those country case studies and thematic papers, along with relevant videos and project briefs, are available on the UNRISD website.[3]

26. Key findings and policy implications of the research cover several broad areas: rights-based approaches to social welfare; new relationships within donor-backed policy initiatives; the emergence of civil society organizations in transition economies; social policy as a component of integrated sustainable development; and challenges to ensuring the longevity of social policy.

27. The research findings and policy implications were the basis for discussions with stakeholders at a training session on transformative social policy, organized by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning; a strategic dialogue on poverty and inequality, organized by the Social Development Division of Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific; and a policy dialogue on social protection for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, hosted by the Centre for Social Development in Africa, in Johannesburg.

3. Valueworks: effects of financialization along the copper value chain

28. UNRISD is part of an international research consortium that, with funding from the Swiss Network for International Studies, has been implementing the project entitled "Valueworks: effects of financialization along the copper value chain" in the biennium 2017–2018. As part of the project, a multi-country research team has been examining social dynamics at the different nodes of the copper value chain, from mining pits and the surrounding communities in Zambia, through towns and harbours along African transport corridors, through Swiss trading firms and banks, to industrial production and recycling sites in China.

29. During the biennium, UNRISD produced two background papers, entitled "Financialization and social development" and "Extractive industries and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and commissioned work on the gendered impacts of copper mining on communities near the Mopani copper mines and Chinese-operated non-ferrous metals mines in Zambia.

30. The project has generated empirical evidence and analysis that can help to improve oversight of the sector, in order to move towards more ethical trading systems that are conducive to the vision of sustainable development. The research findings are being presented at a stakeholder round table and public debate and at a research symposium, held in Geneva in December 2018 and attended by the international project research team and United Nations participants.

[3] See www.unrisd.org/ndsp.

4. Linking new technology and human rights for sustainable development

31. The Institute undertook several activities during the biennium to explore the intersections between new technology and human rights across a range of dimensions relevant to inclusive, sustainable development. Those initiatives were supported by the Republic of Korea and UNRISD institutional funds.

32. The area of inquiry is aligned with the Secretary-General's strategy for utilizing new technologies towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Of particular importance to the Institute is the risk that inequality in access to new technologies will produce, rather than reduce, other forms of inequality.

33. UNRISD published a series of think pieces on the intersections between new technologies and the rights to health, work, social protection and freedom of expression. The series was launched at the thirty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council.

34. For the thirty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, UNRISD and its partners in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea organized two activities. The first, in conjunction with the Permanent Missions of Austria and Denmark, was an official side event on human rights in the design and implementation of emerging technologies and leveraging technologies to achieve human rights objectives. The second, conducted in conjunction with Ciné-ONU, was a screening of the documentary film "The Cleaners", which was followed by a public debate.

35. UNRISD has also convened experts and influencers from the blockchain community, development practitioners and researchers to a debate on the theme "Blockchain for inclusive and sustainable development: fact or fantasy?" in the margins of the World Investment Forum, in Geneva in 2018.

5. Linking social protection and human rights

36. The activity, "Linking social protection and human rights", initiated in 2013, aims to improve understanding of the human rights-based approach to social protection and to provide resources that can support the development of capacities to implement rights-based social protection systems. It includes a web-based platform[4] that outlines fundamental principles and includes relevant instruments, examples of jurisprudence, best practice, and expert commentaries on key topics. The Institute's unearmarked institutional funding supported the activity during the biennium.

37. Throughout the biennium, UNRISD engaged with 10 other United Nations agency partners in its role as platform administrator. The Institute organized two official side events during sessions of the Human Rights Council to raise awareness and the visibility of the platform.

38. UNRISD also partnered with the Social Protection Department of the International Labour Organization to convene a special session of the fifth conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network, in order to raise awareness of the importance of a human rights-based approach to social protection.

39. Subsequently, five of the conference papers, plus an introduction, were published in a special issue of *International Social Security Review* on the theme "The human right to social security".[5]

[4] Available at www.socialprotection-humanrights.org.

[5] Available at https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/1468246x/70/4.

6. Overcoming inequalities in a fractured world: call for papers and international conference

40. Inequality is one of today's greatest challenges, obstructing poverty reduction and sustainable development. Elite capture of economic and political power catalyses such disparities; undermines social, environmental and economic sustainability; and fuels poverty, insecurity, crime and xenophobia.

41. As the power of elites grows and societal gaps widen, institutions representing the public good and universal values are increasingly disempowered or co-opted, and visions of social justice and equity are sidelined. As a result, society is fracturing in ways that are becoming more and more tangible, with the growing divide between the privileged and the rest dramatically rearranging both macro structures and local lifeworlds, giving rise to profound changes not only to social, economic, environmental and political structures but also to people's daily lives.

42. The 2030 Agenda seeks to overcome such disparities and to leave no one behind. But how can that ambitious vision be achieved in the current climate, in which those in power act to protect the status quo from which they benefit? How can we build progressive alliances to drive the political and policy changes needed for an equitable and inclusive eco-social compact for twenty-first century?

43. In 2018, UNRISD launched an open call for papers in view of an international conference on the theme "Overcoming inequalities in a fractured world: between elite power and social mobilization". Within that workstream, the Institute seeks to shine a spotlight on inequality not only as it affects the "bottom of the pyramid", but also in relation to elite power and all its ramifications. The Institute's unearmarked institutional funding supported that activity, with conference support from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the International Geneva Welcome Centre.

44. The call for papers received over 1,000 submissions. At the conference in November 2018, nine panels featured scholars and practitioners from over 30 countries and from a diversity of disciplines. A former chief economist of the World Bank, François Bourguignon, and an environmental activist and feminist scholar, Vandana Shiva, delivered keynote addresses. The University of Geneva co-hosted the opening public round table with Naila Kabeer, Saskia Sassen and Jomo Kwame Sundaram, on the theme "Engines of inequality? Elites, politics and power". A panel of United Nations and civil society representatives discussed the politics of transformative change, bringing the conference to a practice-oriented close.

45. The conference fostered a knowledge exchange and mutual learning across academia, civil society, the United Nations and national Governments, with respect to progressive alliances and policy change for more equitable, sustainable and just societies. Evidence-based recommendations were also proposed on innovative ways that diverse actors can work together to design and deliver a transformative eco-social compact for the twenty-first century.

46. Going forward, UNRISD will bring that new evidence and analysis to bear on United Nations debates and country-level policy processes, including with respect to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the global conversation on inequality in the lead-up to the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development. The Institute plans to pursue further research in that regard.

7. Other results and impacts

47. An edited volume, entitled *Towards Universal Health Care in Emerging Economies: Opportunities and Challenges*, was published in 2017 as part of the

UNRISD/Palgrave Social Policy in a Development Context series.[6] The research findings and policy recommendations were disseminated to a global audience by means of a webinar in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth,[7] and a book launch was held in South Africa at the 2017 Social Policy in Africa Conference.

48. UNRISD undertook the following commissioned studies during the biennium for United Nations entities and Member State institutions:

(a) "Transformative change for children and youth in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (United Nations Children's Fund; 2017–2018). The study brought together UNRISD work on issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals and the concept of transformative change as developed and explored in the Institute's 2016 flagship report, *Policy Innovations for Transformative Change: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*,[8] and UNICEF research and operational activities for children;

(b) "The Western Balkans, EU accession, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: opportunities for transformation" (United Nations Development Programme and Economic Commission for Europe; 2017–2018). UNRISD was commissioned to take stock of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the western Balkan countries, as a substantive input to the regional forum on sustainable development in 2018;

(c) "Supporting mainstreaming and implementation of the SDGs in the Eastern Partnership countries" (United Nations Development Programme and Economic Commission for Europe; 2018). Following the successful completion of the assessment for the western Balkan countries, UNRISD was commissioned to adapt the methodology to the Eastern Partnership countries as a substantive input to the regional forum on sustainable development in 2019;

(d) "Welfare, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners: lessons from successful experiences" (National Centre for Social Studies, Saudi Arabia; 2016–2017). The report was issued to inform the work of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Saudi Arabia. It was published as an UNRISD working paper in 2018.[9]

B. Gender and development

49. Despite a deficit in staffing capacity in the gender and development programme during the biennium, UNRISD sought to maintain its research collaboration and network relations in the area of gender and development. A senior research coordinator was assigned the role of focal point for gender. The Institute delivered a lower rate of new project development, yet sustained research activities and productivity thanks to a mainstreamed gender perspective across all areas of work. The Institute took gender parity into account in the planning and implementation of all its activities, and women comprised over 50 percent of its research network and 50 percent of contributors to research outputs.

50. A new research project was developed on transgender rights, under the umbrella of the 2030 Agenda and its commitment to leaving no one behind. The Institute's

[6] Available at www.palgrave.com/de/series/14480.

[7] The webinar was hosted by socialprotection.org.

[8] Available at www.unrisd.org/flagship2016.

[9] The revised version of the report was published under the title "Experiences with welfare, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners: lessons learned?". Available at http://www.unrisd.org/gisler-et-al.

initiative in that area has generated significant interest across the United Nations system and in civil society, although fundraising has proved difficult.

51. By the end of the biennium, the Institute had reconsolidated its financial situation. It was in a position to initiate the recruitment of a senior gender and development researcher in 2019 and has sought to have a Junior Professional Officer with gender expertise assigned to begin rebuilding the research portfolio under this programme area.

1. Feminist analysis of social and solidarity economic practices: views from Latin America and India

52. The Institute was a partner in a project to provide a feminist analysis of social and solidarity economic practices in Latin America and India. The project was initiated in 2015 and concluded in 2018. It was funded by the Swiss Network for International Studies and led by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Research teams in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil and India were also part of this interdisciplinary inquiry.

53. Women play a major role in social and solidarity economic activities, which can be found in almost all sectors of the economy. The research aimed to fill some of the gaps in social and solidarity economic analysis and policies from a feminist perspective.

54. To summarize the main themes and findings of the research, the project team co-produced the following three briefs: "Revalorization of social reproduction through social and solidarity economy practices"; "Solidarity practices and the formation of political subjects and actions for change"; and "Making public policies for SSE sustainable, feminist-conscious and transformative: exploring the challenges".

55. The teams managing the six case studies took video footage as they worked. That documentary evidence of the women's collectives studied and the results of the research can be viewed in the video entitled "Bubbling up: solidarities, feminisms and social reproduction".[10]

2. Other results and impacts

56. The report entitled "Innovations in care: new concepts, new actors, new policies" was published by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and UNRISD in 2017.[11] The report provides concrete policy examples that can contribute to meeting target 5.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which focuses on recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work.

57. Four articles were published as a collection entitled "Feminist mobilization, claims making and policy change" in 2018.[12] Those articles are outputs of the project entitled "When and why do States respond to women's claims? Understanding gender-egalitarian policy change in Asia".[13]

C. Social dimensions of sustainable development

58. Work under the social dimensions of sustainable development programme highlights the potential of innovative eco-social solutions and alternative approaches

[10] Available at www.unrisd.org/feminist-sse, in English, French and Spanish.

[11] Available at http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/13282.pdf.

[12] See *Development and Change* vol. 49, No. 3 (May 2018), pp. 695–789.

[13] See http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/(httpProjects)/FFDCCF9EE4F2F9C6C1257BEF004FB03E.

in tackling unsustainable development practices, climate change and social injustice. Continuing the Institute's efforts to highlight and examine the key but often neglected or ignored issues in sustainable development, the programme focuses on the intersecting nature of social, environmental and economic policies and practices at the global, national and local levels.

59. During the biennium, UNRISD continued to expand its portfolio of research on the social and solidarity economy for the Sustainable Development Goals, with new research on the social economy in Seoul, and on the role of the social and solidarity economy in protecting vulnerable groups in urban settings. A multi-year initiative on sustainable development impact indicators was also launched.

60. As part of progress made in the eco-social policy workstream during the biennium, UNRISD engaged with research and policy networks with a focus on resilience as an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability, set up a new research collaborative to carry out work on the just transition approach, and launched a project to study transformative adaptation to climate change in south-east Asian coastal cities.

1. Social and solidarity economy

61. Socially sustainable development requires rethinking the relationship between the organization of the economy and the sustainability of outcomes. Multiple global crises, together with the impetus of the 2030 Agenda, have reignited a search for alternative ways to organize consumption, production and distribution.

62. The social and solidarity economy refers to forms of production and exchange that aim to satisfy human needs, enhance well-being and contribute to sustainability through organizations and relations based on cooperation and solidarity. The social and solidarity economy reflects an integrative, people-centred and planet-sensitive approach and has the potential to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the achievement of the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind.

63. UNRISD continued its active participation in the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy. During the biennium, the Institute led a call for papers that assess the contributions of the social and solidarity economy to inclusive and sustainable development;[14] designed and undertook a mapping of the uptake of the term "social and solidarity economy" by intergovernmental organizations at the regional and international levels;[15] and published a brief on methodologies to measure the scale and impact of the social and solidarity economy.[16]

(a) Social and solidarity economy for the Sustainable Development Goals: spotlight on the social economy in Seoul

64. The Institute carried out research in 2017–2018, with funding from the Global Social Economy Forum, to examine the social economy in Seoul and its potential and actual contributions to the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level.

65. On the basis of secondary sources and new empirical evidence, the analysis reveals how the social economy is supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in a balanced and integrated way. It found a growing social economy ecosystem owing to the expansion of the social economy in Seoul, and a

[14] See http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BE6B5/(httpNews)/B0AF81DFDB8D672FC125829E004AD9F5?OpenDocument&newstype=news.

[15] See http://unsse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UNTFSSE-KH-Resources-Mapping-of-Intergovernmental-Documentation-on-Social-and-Solidarity-Economy-SSE.pdf.

[16] Available at www.unrisd.org/ib9.

strong commitment on the part of the Seoul metropolitan government to both the social economy and the Sustainable Development Goals. While identifying some limitations and challenges within the current context, the research points to a number of lessons for other cities seeking to learn from experience in promoting and strengthening the social and solidarity economy and fostering its potential as a means of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

66. The research findings were published in a report, and summarized in three policy briefs, entitled "Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals through social and solidarity economy", "The social economy in Seoul: assessing the economic, social, environmental and political impacts", and "The social economy and an integrated approach to the localized Sustainable Development Goals in Seoul: interrogating the evidence".[17]

67. In 2018, UNRISD presented the research and policy implications at a side event of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and at the Global Social Economy Forum.

(b) Protecting vulnerable urban groups in contentious times: the role of the social and solidarity economy

68. UNRISD is a research partner in a project, to be implemented from 2018 to 2019, to examine the role of the social and solidarity economy in protecting vulnerable urban groups. The project is being led by the University of Geneva and is being funded by the Swiss Network for International Studies.

69. Much recent growth in social and solidarity economy activities, notably in Europe, has centred on the provision of services to and the social integration of migrants and refugees. Research in that regard is being carried out in Bergamo, Italy, Geneva, and Heraklion, Greece, to explore the role of and the challenges faced by social and solidarity economy actors in mitigating tensions among unemployed native-born citizens, migrants and refugees. It aims to identify the characteristics of policy environments that enable and embed solidarity in local societies. The findings will be of use to policymakers and practitioners seeking innovative and inclusive policies relating to refugees and migrants in urban settings.

2. Sustainable development impact indicators

70. In September 2018, with support from the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship Studies in the Republic of Korea, UNRISD commenced a four-year project on sustainable development impact indicators with the aim of assessing and improving methodologies and indicator systems that measure and evaluate the performance of for-profit and non-profit entities in relation to the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda.

71. The effectiveness of sustainability measurement and reporting has improved significantly in recent years with new standards and the reform of existing tools. The project is aimed at expanding the scope of sustainability measurement, disclosure and reporting to encompass social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations; identifying data points and indicators related to the social and solidarity economy that can inform approaches to sustainability measurement used by for-profit enterprises; and developing and testing a set of sustainable development impact indicators that can address the twenty-first century challenges that the 2030 Agenda is intended to tackle.

[17] Available at www.unrisd.org/sse-sdgs-seoul.

3. Social and environmental policy linkages

72. Sustainable development entails prosperity and human well-being within the ecological limits of the planet. Under an eco-social approach to policymaking and implementation, economic activities are a means of achieving equity and environmental sustainability. UNRISD has applied that framework to its research on the social dimensions of climate change and its impacts.

(a) Linking resilience thinking and transformative change

73. UNRISD strengthened its engagement with scholarly and policy debates around social-ecological resilience for sustainability, organizing a session at the Resilience 2017 conference and publishing a series of think pieces. The Institute's unearmarked institutional funding supported this activity.

74. Selected from submissions to an open call, this work brought together contributions from a variety of disciplines (economics, sociology, development studies, political science) and geographic contexts to explore examples of how socio-environmental challenges are being addressed, from local, community-based approaches to national policies and international law, and the extent to which the responses build resilience and foster transformative change.

(b) Just Transition Research Collaborative

75. The term "just transition" is growing in popularity and use, but what does it really mean and how can the growing interest be explained? Funded by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, with support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and in-kind support from the University of London Institute in Paris, the Institute established the Just Transition Research Collaborative in 2018 to answer those questions.

76. The objective of the Just Transition Research Collaborative is to analyse the different understandings, narratives and framework of a just transition in order to inform the science-policy dialogue and offer concrete recommendations on how the just transition approach can be used to foster transformative change towards equitable and sustainable development. The Just Transition Research Collaborative is scheduled to deliver a report in December 2018.

77. An online forum,[18] hosted jointly by the International Social Science Council and project partners, is also part of the initiative. It showcases a variety of case studies, narratives and approaches to a just transition and their implications for equity and social justice.

78. In 2018, the work of the Just Transition Research Collaborative was presented at a workshop, organized by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to create awareness in Africa regarding the implementation of measures in response to climate change, and as part of a dialogue series on the greening of jobs, organized by the United Nations Environment Management Group. The final report will be launched at twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties to the Convention in December.

(c) Transformative adaptation to climate change

79. The effects of climate change call for rapid action to both reduce the extent of impacts and prepare for unavoidable ones. Adaptation measures in coastal cities often focus on either infrastructure-heavy, protective interventions to reduce hazard

[18] Available at https://medium.com/just-transitions.

exposure, or community-based measures to strengthen individual coping and adaptive capacities. Relatively little attention is paid to bridging the gap between the two.

80. UNRISD organized an expert group meeting, held in November 2018, to discuss the concept of transformative adaptation (understood to refer to change that can overcome root causes of vulnerability) as a means of integrating the social dimension into climate adaptation measures. Participants will assess the implications and potential of that approach to contribute to urban climate resilience and social development in two case study cities: Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, and Jakarta, Indonesia.

81. Recommendations will be presented at a public seminar at the United Nations Office at Geneva, and in a position paper and policy brief. The inquiry is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

4. Other results and impacts

(a) Civil society assessment of Sustainable Development Goal implementation

82. UNRISD hosted the Geneva launch of the "Spotlight on sustainable development" reports in 2017 and 2018. These civil society "shadow" reports are produced by a global coalition of civil society organizations and trade unions.

(b) Training for Sustainable Development Goal implementation

83. In 2017, UNRISD shared its research results on how the social and solidarity economy can facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level with 120 participants from over 50 countries at the United Nations Summer Academy, which was hosted by the Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development of the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC). UNRISD also worked with UNSSC to create six micro-learning modules based on the Institute's 2016 flagship report, "*Policy Innovations for Transformative Change: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*".

(c) World Social Work Day

84. UNRISD brought local and international social work partners to the United Nations Office at Geneva to mark World Social Work Day in 2017 with the theme "Social work and sustainable development", and in 2018 with the theme "Social work and youth: towards inclusive sustainable development". In this way, the Institute has helped to build a bridge between the international community and the social workers on the front line of Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

(d) Arab Forum for Sustainable Development

85. In 2017 UNRISD partnered with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in the preparation and delivery of the annual Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, using research findings to inform the coherent and coordinated implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region.

IV. Communications and outreach

86. The mandate of the Institute requires that its research be policy-relevant and engage with pressing issues of concern to the United Nations system and Member States. The Institute aims to ensure that its research reaches a broad range of actors concerned with different facets of social development, and that its findings inform intergovernmental and national policy processes, civil society advocacy and scholarly

debates. During the biennium, the Institute pursued a range of innovative and traditional communications and outreach activities to make its research available, accessible and relevant to key stakeholders, to increase its reach and visibility in the global community, and to foster engagement and interaction with audiences.

87. During the biennium, the Institute:

(a) Produced and disseminated a wide range of research-based outputs, including 25 research papers, 17 policy briefs and other briefs, 23 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, and over 60 blogs and think pieces;

(b) Used digital media to both deliver research and engage with a wide audience, generating over 100,000 publication downloads,[19] 80,000 video views,[20] and 84,000 podcast downloads,[21] and attaining a gross following of nearly 52,000 on UNRISD social media sites,[22] by September 2018;

(c) Fostered face-to-face engagement and dialogue among stakeholders through nearly 50 events organized (or co-organized) with the United Nations, Member States, and academic and civil society partners;

(d) Dispatched 11 e-bulletins to share research findings and other information with a wide audience,[23] and 8 tailored e-newsletters to respond to the research information needs of Member States and of United Nations development policy actors.

88. An important channel for the Institute to influence research is through the engagement of its staff in advisory and consultative activities for Government and United Nations entities, participation in expert meetings, and the provision of verbal or written inputs as required. Institute staff carried out over 80 advisory and consultative activities in 2017 and 2018.

V. Institutional issues

89. UNRISD receives no funding from the budget of the United Nations and is therefore reliant on the resources it receives, which come primarily from Governments and foundations. The funding context for UNRISD has shifted significantly in the last decade, as donors have moved away from institutional funding towards project funding through competitive processes.

90. That shift has helped to orient the providers of research towards the demands of funders, and UNRISD has welcomed the incentives that this has created. At the same time, the Institute's unique characteristics have made it challenging for the Institute to replace declining unearmarked institutional funding with that allocated solely for projects. Those characteristics include a long-term horizon, insistence on working with and strengthening the capacities of researchers from the global South, a critical approach, and the Institute's position within the architecture of the United Nations.

91. Nevertheless, UNRISD has been successful over the biennium in building a healthy portfolio of projects that extend into 2020, in fulfilment of its institutional strategy. A greater focus on cost recovery within projects has allowed for reserves to be rebuilt to safeguard the Institute against future shocks.

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[19] Downloaded from www.unrisd.org.

[20] Viewed on the UNRISD YouTube channel (see www.youtube.com/unrisd).

[21] Downloaded from iTunes and Player FM.

[22] The gross following is the sum of likes, followers, subscribers and unique visitors of the Institute on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. The Institute's gross following was 45,428 in 2017.

[23] Available at www.unrisd.org/ebulletin-list.

92. It was agreed with the United Nations Office at Geneva that UNRISD would hold a reserve for potential staff repatriation expenditures. The Board decided to hold an additional reserve to cover estimated expenditures for the first four months of any given year in order to mitigate the risk of cash flow issues owing to the timing of receipt of unearmarked donor contributions at the start of the year.

93. The total value of the reserves reached approximately $1 million at the end of the biennium. Further savings will be used to re-establish certain research positions, specifically in the area of gender and development.

94. Despite increasing project funding success, the Institute continues to rely on a base level of unearmarked institutional funding. In the new biennium, it will be important not only to maintain support from existing institutional partners, but also to explore new opportunities where they arise.

95. On 19 April 2018, UNRISD convened a stakeholder meeting with representatives of key bilateral donors and partners, United Nations entities and Secretariat departments to discuss the Institute's institutional strategy, financing and governance.

A. Mid-term review

96. In addition to its annual narrative reporting, UNRISD carried out a self-assessment in 2017 through the lens of its results-based management logical framework. The review assessed the Institute's research and communications. It also assessed aspects of the Institute's operations, including governance reform, institutional and financial stability, and efforts to increase the predictability and sustainability of funding through resource mobilization and diversification.

97. Through the self-assessment, it was determined that the Institute's substantive work in research and communications was on track, with UNRISD determining its programme of work, setting priorities and delivering on commitments within the available budget envelope. The assessment also involved an analysis of whether the outputs delivered were of a sufficient critical mass to fulfil the UNRISD strategy and mandate. The metrics and analysis demonstrated that the Institute's work was valued and used by stakeholders — academia, civil society, national policymakers and practitioners, and within the United Nations — and therefore surpassed a critical mass threshold.

98. A risk assessment was carried out in relation to UNRISD finances, operations and governance. For each risk identified, an impact and probability score was assigned and mitigating measures were proposed. The headline messages of the risk assessment were as follows:

(a) The apex risk faced by UNRISD is a decrease in unearmarked institutional funding. A fall in the existing level would translate directly into staff cuts and a reduction in research activities. On the basis of commitments to unearmarked funding, during the biennium UNRISD focused on mobilizing more earmarked project funding and on higher rates of cost recovery. With the existing level of unearmarked funding and, owing to financial consolidation measures undertaken to ensure that reserves are sufficient to cover all current commitments and potential liabilities, UNRISD is operating at a viable and sustainable level, irrespective of whether earmarked project funding turns out to be greater or less than, or equal to, that projected;

(b) The main risk associated with staffing continues to be that UNRISD has sub-optimal capacity in its gender and development programme. Although gender issues are mainstreamed across all the Institute's activities, and discrete activities on gender continue, the lack of a dedicated senior research coordinator may have a

negative impact on the Institute's credibility in the subject area. By the end of the biennium, the Institute had reconsolidated its financial situation and was in a position to initiate the recruitment of a senior gender and development researcher in 2019;

(c) The governance reform processes agreed with the Institute's primary stakeholders are very important to the long-term stability of the Institute. Governance reform was under way during the biennium.

B. Management and staffing

99. As at 31 October 2018, seven staff members were under contract at the Institute in Geneva: the director, two senior research coordinators, one research officer, one communications and outreach staff member, and two administrative and support staff members. UNRISD received support from Germany from 2014 to 2017 for the assignment of a Junior Professional Officer to focus on the social dimensions of climate change. Once that support came to an end, the Junior Professional Officer was recruited as a research officer on 5 October 2017.

100. UNRISD projects are supported by junior researchers employed as consultants: during the biennium 2017–2018 there were four research analysts. In addition, three consultants supported communications activities. The Institute also hosted 8 visiting research fellows and benefited from the support of interns.

C. Governance and Board

101. The Board of the Institute met in Geneva on 27 and 28 April 2017 and on 19 and 20 April 2018.

102. The composition of the Board changed during the reporting period. The Board chairperson, Maureen O'Neil, completed her six-year term. The Secretary-General approved the appointment of Joakim Palme for an initial period of two years, effective 1 July 2017. Mr. Palme had already been serving as a Board member since July 2013.

103. The terms of members Huang Ping and Patricia Schulz expired on 30 June 2017.

104. The first terms of Jimi Adesina, Asef Bayat, David Hulme, Joakim Palme (later appointed as Chair) and Onalenna Selolwane expired on 30 June 2017. Their renominations to serve until 30 June 2019 were confirmed by the Economic and Social Council.

105. The first term of Saraswati Menon (2015–2019) was ongoing.

106. At its thirty-third plenary meeting, the Economic and Social Council confirmed the nomination by the Commission for Social Development of Sylvie Durrer to serve on the Board for a four-year term expiring on 30 June 2021.

107. As such, at the time of reporting, the Board had six nominated members and four seats were vacant.

108. During the biennium, UNRISD undertook a comprehensive review of its founding statutes, in conjunction with the Institute's Board, its principal funding partners and other stakeholders, including other United Nations organizations. The intention of the review was to update the Institute's working modalities, including those of the Board, to ensure that they were fit for the times and that governance and oversight were strengthened. At the time of reporting, the revised statutes were undergoing a final review of common services arrangements by the Division of Administration of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

D. Financial report

109. The Institute receives no money from the United Nations general budget and is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from Governments, research foundations, United Nations agencies and other institutions.

110. At the time of reporting and with 2018 accounts still open, the total income of the Institute (excluding miscellaneous income) for 2017–2018 is estimated at $4.785 million (see table). Estimated total expenditures are $4.311 million.

111. Institutional (unearmarked) funding is estimated at $3.822 million, of which $400,000 is from Finland, $2.292 million is from Sweden and $1.129 million is from Switzerland (see table).

112. The Institute is currently dependent on two principal funders — Sweden (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and Switzerland (the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) — for financing institutional costs and key research, communications and impact activities.

113. A two-year funding agreement with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (2017–2018) expires at the end of 2018. A three-year agreement with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2017–2019) expires at the end of 2019.

114. At the time of reporting, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency had agreed to continue funding UNRISD at the current level in 2019, to be followed by discussions on future funding scenarios for 2020 and beyond. Multi-year agreements ensure predictable funding flows and underpin the future stability of the Institute.

115. Earmarked (project) funding is estimated at $963,215. Luxembourg (Ministry of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy) provided support for work on a social and solidarity economy knowledge hub for the Sustainable Development Goals. Germany, through its Federal Foreign Office, contributed funds for a project entitled "Transformative adaption: tackling the root causes of vulnerability to climate change in south-east Asia". Other funds were provided by the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Europe, as well as several other United Nations agencies, foundations and non-governmental organizations (see table).

116. Important contributions not reflected in the table came from the Government of Germany (for a Junior Professional Officer, for the period 2014–2017) and the United Nations Office at Geneva (for office space and programme support).

Funding sources, 2017-2018[a]

(United States dollars)

Donor	
Countries	
Finland, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	400 000
Germany, Federal Foreign Office	53 990
Luxembourg, Ministry of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy	59 737
Sweden, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	2 292 466
Switzerland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	200 000
Switzerland, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	929 362
United Nations agencies	
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	8 560
UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre	30 000
Economic Commission for Europe	70 000
United Nations Development Programme	60 000
Research foundations and other funders	
Centre for Social Entrepreneurship Studies	344 500
Global Social Economy Forum	179 400
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	30 268
National Centre for Social Studies	15 000
Rosa Luxemburg Foundation	24 793
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland	32 055
University of Basel	27 831
University of Geneva	27 081
Total	**4 785 043**

[a] Estimates as at 31 October 2018, excluding miscellaneous income and in-kind contributions.